

The CRA's 2020 Distinguished Teacher-Educator: Dr. Rayfel Schneider

From where do you think your passion for medical education stemmed? Can you recall a teacher in your own past who inspired your direction into education?

My interest in medical education took root during my medical training. As one of the Chief Residents in Pediatrics, I had the opportunity to be engaged in organizing educational sessions for residents and in teaching junior residents and students. I also had the good fortune to work closely with the Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the time, Dr. Bob Haslam. He was a master clinician and an outstanding educator, intensively engaged with learners at all levels. He more or less took me under his wing and inspired, encouraged and supported me to pursue a career with a strong interest in medical education. I could not have had a better mentor.

My fellowship in pediatric rheumatology turned out to be a good match for a focus in education since my rheumatology mentors were also among the most talented and engaged teachers in the department. I learned from the best!

As a Program Director, you've built the SickKids pediatric rheumatology training program into one of the largest and most successful in the world. What are some of the challenges you've faced?

Actually, being a Program Director in pediatric rheumatology was the most rewarding period of my career. As a Program Director, one has the privilege of accompanying the brightest and most passionate young men and women on their formative journeys in rheumatology and the opportunity to learn with and from them. It has been particularly gratifying to see residents and fellows transition from trainees to colleagues and collaborators, and to be able to cement long-standing friendships with them over the years. One of the very best aspects of working at a training hub



for physicians from across Canada and around the world is to be part of a national and international network of alumni. Many former trainees have become leaders in their own centres and experts in specific diseases. It is wonderful to have far-flung friends I can readily call on to help with difficult diagnostic or treatment dilemmas.

Given your extensive work in medical education, where do you see the future of medical education moving?

We are in the midst of the most dramatic and exciting changes in medical education in decades – the shift to competency-based education, with a welcome focus on direct observation of clinical skills and

coaching to competence, rather than an emphasis on high-stakes evaluation. We also have a long-overdue momentum to ensure that the learning environment is safe, respectful and welcoming for all.

You have been the recipient of many prestigious teaching awards, but what was your first thought when you learned that you would receive this particular award?

Gratitude for the efforts of my nominators, mentors and colleagues and for the opportunities to get to know and learn with so many residents and fellows who have spent time in our training program.

As a respected teacher-educator, what would your advice be to a prospective rheumatologist?

If you like a rapidly-evolving specialty that deals with a diverse spectrum of diseases, with increasingly effective treatment modalities and the opportunity to develop meaningful long-term relationships with patients and families, then rheumatology is a great choice. I find that, by and large, rheumatologists are kind, thoughtful, compassionate and



Dr. Schneider received his award via videoconference from then CRA President Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia and Dr. Raheem Kherani.

collaborative physicians, who derive a great deal of satisfaction from their work.

Are you more of morning or night person?

Definitely a morning person, particularly when I don't also try to be the night person.

How many cups of coffee does it take to make a productive day?

At least two; a third cup has to be balanced with the risk of a tremor.

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Getting Action, Raising Voices

By Trish Barbato, President and CEO, Arthritis Society

As Canada continues to confront COVID-19, the Arthritis Society has been working hard to draw attention to the serious health challenge that is emerging – the alarming backlog of joint replacement surgeries.

More than 5,000 Canadians have so far joined our call, asking their elected representatives to make this a priority. We also began efforts this summer to convene a Pan-Canadian Working Group to recommend practical strategies for how we can swiftly increase surgeries and implement new and innovative models of care and prevention. CRA members can expect to hear more about this effort in the coming months.



Governments in Canada reacted with admirable speed and purpose to the economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We know it is now time to bring that same sense of urgency to this growing crisis in arthritis care.

Arthritis Awareness Month in September is providing us with an additional platform to raise awareness of these issues. Throughout the month, the Arthritis Society has been inviting Canadians from coast to coast to join us in raising one million voices and \$1 million for the six million Canadians with arthritis. Look for news about our #1for6million campaign and please join in. Visit arthritis.ca to learn more.